

344 ^MILE ZOLA, NOVELIST AND
BEFOKMEB,

As it is with Zola's short stories so it is with his earlier novels: "La Confession de Claude" is a struggle between poetry and reality, the presentment of a soul longing for the empyrean but forced to surrender to all the horrors of degradation, The fragmentary " Voeu d'une Morte " contains indications of the same battle continuing. "Les Myst&res de Marseilles" is a thing apart; but, at last, in " Th&rfese Raquin " and " Madeleine F6rat" realism triumphs brutally and in its first victorious hour blackens the canvas to excess. Average truth is disregarded — as Zola himself admits — and the agony is piled on to the point of nightmare. This is done, perchance, by the realist in Zola in order that no loophole may be left for the poet, also within him, to rise again.

But take the Bougon-Macquart series, and there, amid all the realism of twenty volumes, a revival of the poetic sense will be found displaying itself repeatedly. Eemember the idyll of Silv&re and Miette, that of Marjolin and Cadine, that of Ang^lique and F^licien, that of Serge and Albine, the Paradou, H^lfene and Henri, the vistas of Paris from the heights of Passy, the love of G-oujet for Gervaise, even that of Georges Hugon for ISTana, the epic march of the miners in "Germinal,"³ the epic charge of the cavalry at Sedan, Clotilde's communion with herself while giving suck to her

babe, and all the other instances. There may be no trace of poetry and romance in " Th&fese Kaquin/" but Zola when writing that book must have known full well that he had only scotched, not killed, his poetic tendencies. To understand Mm aright, let us remember that lie made Ms *dSbuts* at a time when science was enlarging her domain daily. For him she exercised a fascination equal to that of art. In his